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22nd November 2018

Fergus Ewing
Cabinet Secretary
Rural Economy
T 3. 25
The Scottish Parliament.
Edinburgh
EH99 1SP

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Dear Cabinet Secretary,

The Scottish White Fish Producers Association represents over 240 vessels with thirty of those dredging for Scallops. Our association very much prides itself on the influence and leadership it has provided in recovering fish stocks and in the protection of vulnerable marine ecosystems such as those in place at Rockall Bank and through the network of inshore MPAs.

In 2017 we responded to reports of rogue fishing within Loch Carron by invoking a voluntary closure for members around a number of other, similar features. We are committed to maintaining the integrity of the Scallop sector, a commitment that leaves no place for illegal fishing as was reported by Open Seas very recently within Loch Gairloch.

SWFPA was instrumental in calling for electronic monitoring on board scallop vessels above 15 metres. We are now calling on the Scottish Government to introduce such measures on board every vessel dredging for scallops, irrespective of size. It is important that we put an end to unwelcome transgressions, which seem to be occurring in the absence of scrutiny and secure monitoring of inshore vessels.

We recognise the commitment the Scottish Government has made to broaden the requirement for vessel monitoring and understand that planning is now underway for the introduction of appropriate monitoring technology for the inshore fleet from 2020. We very much support this commitment but would ask that you consider a fast-track process for vessels operating with scallop dredges. It is now time to insist that every vessel dredging for scallops is subject to vessel monitoring, irrespective of size.

We ask you to consider as a priority the introduction of a licence condition which makes it illegal to dredge for scallops without a secure onboard vessel monitoring system.

Look forward to hearing from you.

Yours Sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'M Park', written in a cursive style.

Michael Park OBE
CEO
SWFPA